

The Front Counter

A building department's first point of contact is the front counter. Here building permits, inspection scheduling and answers to questions are given daily. Residential Plans examiner **Brian Tomsett** with over 30 years of experience in building and planning and Permit Technician **Ken Hartog** who joined the department two years ago after spending 14 years with animal control, provide a wealth of information to the public along with quality customer service. Both are International Code Conference certified in their respective fields.

2009 Department Statistics

Permits Issued: **1,989**

Plan Reviews Performed: **264**

Inspections Performed: **5,165**

New Commercial Buildings: **10**

New Residential Buildings: **69**

Commercial Alterations & Additions: **94**

Residential Alterations & Additions: **113**

2009 Annual Building Department Activity Report

Year in Review

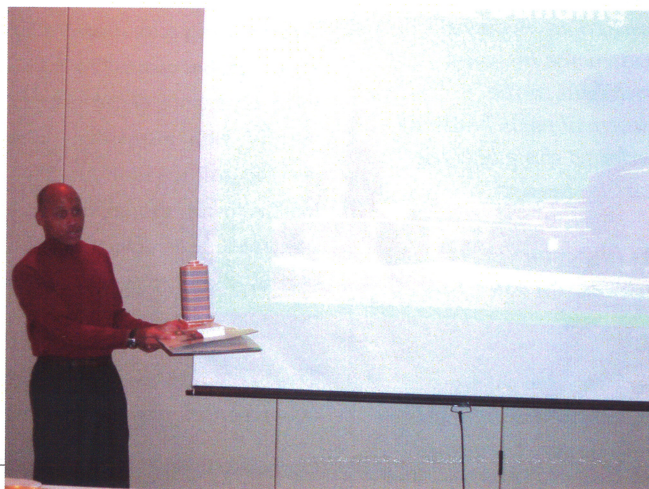
The economic crises which swept the country starting in the fall of 2008 had an adverse effect on construction activity in cities everywhere and Idaho Falls was no exception. However, this did not stop progressive activity within the building department from continuing to flourish.

From taking over the contract for administering our contractor licensing program to expanding access to our services via the internet on the new City of Idaho Falls website, the department has been busy providing the quality of service that contractors, design professionals and citizens have come to expect. Along with the 2009 permit statistics, this report highlights some of the activities and services the building department has been providing.

Licensed Contractor Continuing Education

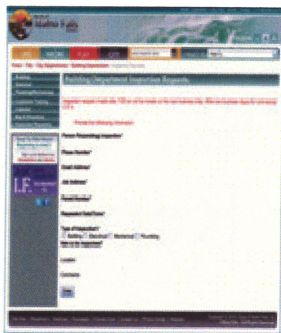
For over twenty-five years the city of Idaho Falls has been in the forefront of comprehensive contractor licensing within the state of Idaho. Starting in 2007 the building department began the requirement for license contractors to maintain continuing education units (CEU) to keep their licenses current. Classes for required CEU's are provided by the building department through contractor renewal fees. They have included an array of building code and construction industry related education designed to keep contractors abreast of the most current code requirements and industry products. All of which provides our citizens safe, economical and well designed buildings for their homes and businesses.

Reginald Fuller teaches course on special inspection and the *2009 International Building Code*. Administration of the licensing program's continuing education classes by the building department saves an estimated \$25,000 per year in training fees.



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A Final Note

With combined experience of over 175 years in the building code and construction industry, building department staff have become an invaluable source of information for our community and throughout the Snake River Valley.

A licensed electrical journeyman since 1972 with over 20 years in inspections, city electrical inspector Terry McNamara has helped numerous homeowners and contractors find solutions to their electrical problems. On one occasion he assisted an electrical contractor by going with him to the electrical parts house in order to show him the part he needed.

As Inspector McNamara has observed:

"It's the day to day aspects of our jobs that help people the most."

Building Department Internet Access

With the creation of a new city website, the building department with expertise from chief electrical inspector **Bob Baird**, has also created more expansive service to contractors, designers and the general public via the internet.

The use of present technology has enabled our citizens an easier and more efficient way of obtaining permit information to complete their projects.

Some of the new features are:

- On-line inspection request.
- Access to permit applications, licensing information and educational training schedules.
- The ability for homeowners and contractors to submit code questions.
- On-line registration for contractor training classes.

Inspection Services

With the expertise of the building department's Chief Mechanical inspector, **Russel Goyen**, funding has been actively pursued from the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA). This has resulted in over \$40,000 being acquired to help in the training of local HVAC contractors to design and install properly sized mechanical equipment, which, in

turn, results in greater comfort and efficiency of such systems.

The Idaho Falls building department has become a leader in the state with regards to the proper enforcement and installation of code compliant mechanical systems. Such expertise and experience led to the detection of a gas leak at a local hotel where the

contractor was guided by the chief mechanical inspector in performing the proper procedures necessary for safe purging and repair of the leak in this unusually large gas piping system. If this leak had not been detected, severe property damage and serious injury or fatalities among the hotel's occupants could have resulted.

Assistance to other City Departments & Contractors

Plumbing inspector **Garret Christoffersen** has assisted a city building maintenance department staff member with instruction on the provisions of the Uniform Plumbing Code for the application of safe and code compliant plumbing systems within city owned facilities.

This assistance has helped the maintenance department staff

member in his endeavor to obtain a state of Idaho journeyman's plumbing license. Working under the direction of a state licensed plumber is needed for the apprenticeship requirements.

In the process of doing an inspection for a residential addition, chief building inspector **John Meyer** discovered the foundation for the addition was too short to

allow for the proper amount of exposed concrete required by the code. Inspector Meyer found a solution which protected the floor framing from any moisture contact thereby making the addition compliant with the code and alleviating any future problems for the homeowner.